

APPENDIX IX: COMMUNICATION PLAN



GREATER YELLOWSTONE INVENTORY AND MONITORING NETWORK

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

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ANNE SCHRAG

Research Associate

**Forestry Sciences Laboratory
Montana State University
1648 S. 7th Avenue
Bozeman, Montana 59717**

<http://www.nature.nps.gov/im/units/gryn/index.shtml>

INTRODUCTION

The Greater Yellowstone Network (GRYN) is an inventory and monitoring network within the National Park Service (NPS) Inventory and Monitoring (I&M) Program. The mission of the National Park Service (NPS) is “to conserve unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment of this and future generations”. To uphold this goal, the NPS created the Natural Resource Challenge in 2000 to encourage national parks to focus on the preservation of the nation’s natural heritage through science, natural resource inventories and expanded resource monitoring and management. This Challenge was legally guided by the *National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998*. Through the Natural Resource Challenge, the 265 parks of the NPS were placed into seven regions and, subsequently, organized into thirty-two inventory and monitoring networks, based on geographic and ecological similarities. The overarching goal of the networks can be summarized by the following quote from the NPS Advisory Board in July 2001: “A sophisticated knowledge of resources and their condition is essential. The Service must gain this knowledge through extensive collaboration with other agencies and academia, and its findings must be communicated to the public. For it is the broader public that will decide the fate of these resources”. The goals of the National I&M Program are:

1. Determine status and trends in selected indicators of the condition of park ecosystems to allow managers to make better-informed decisions and to work more effectively with other agencies and individuals for the benefit of park resources.
2. Provide early warning of “abnormal” conditions and impairment of selected resources to help develop effective mitigation measures and reduce costs of management.
3. Provide data to better understand the dynamic nature and condition of park ecosystems and to provide reference points for comparisons with other, altered environments.
4. Provide data to meet certain legal and Congressional mandates related to natural resource protection and visitor enjoyment.
5. Provide a means of measuring progress toward performance goals.

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN GOALS

The GRYN Communications Plan outlines the communications products and strategies (those required by the National I&M Program and those more specific to the GRYN) and the target audience of these products. As well, after implementation, the communications plan should lead to:

- consistency and repetition in communicating the goals and purposes of the GRYN
- increased cooperation within the GRYN and effectiveness in communicating these goals
- the elimination of contradictory/conflicting messages
- the reinforcement and strengthening of the overall goal of the network
- increased awareness of the network to internal/external members
- increased understanding of network goals by internal/external members
- increased willingness to accept and support network

MAIN AUDIENCES

For the GRYN to be successful in communicating its purpose and progress toward inventory and monitoring, it is essential that the network focus on five audiences: 1) the National I&M Program

and Congress; 2) the GRYN Board of Directors, Technical Committee and Science Committee; 3) Yellowstone National Park, Grand Teton National Park and Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area park managers and employees and audiences external to the NPS including; 4) academic community; 5) other government agencies; 6) non-profit/non-governmental organizations; and 7) the general public.

PRODUCTS

PRODUCTS RECOMMENDED BY THE NATIONAL I&M PROGRAM

The following reports are highlighted by the National I&M Program as methods for information dissemination:

- Annual Administrative Report and Work Plan
- Annual reports for specific protocols or projects
- Inventory project reports
- Analysis and synthesis reports—trends
- Program and protocol review reports
- Scientific journal articles and book chapters
- Symposia, workshops and conferences
- State of the Parks Report

ADDITIONAL COMMUNICATION TOOLS USED BY THE GRYN

In addition to the products recommended by the National I&M Program, the GRYN will use the following methods for informing a variety of audiences:

- Monthly reports
- Submissions to the BNR report at Yellowstone
- Submissions of links for the Intermountain Region report
- Visual identity system
- Public brochures
- Posters for network parks about the I&M program
- Data management reports
- Ongoing list of network cooperators
- Website
- Popular press articles

The intended audiences for these reports will be covered in the following section.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION CONCERNING COMMUNICATIONS PRODUCTS

Each of the listed communication products will be covered in more detail, including the following information: 1) definition and intended audience; 2) frequency of reporting; 3) purpose and content of the report; 4) author of the report; and 5) reporting format.

ANNUAL ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT AND WORK PLAN

Definition: The Annual Administrative Report and Work Plan (AARWP) is required by the National I&M Program and the Washington Office (WASO) as a way to account for funds used during the fiscal year. In order to accomplish this, the report requires that the network account for funds used during the past fiscal year towards completing a list of accomplishments written in the previous year's work plan. Furthermore, the AARWP requires the creation of a budget and work plan for the following year, including staffing, cooperative agreements, contracts, miscellaneous, etc.

Frequency: The AARWP is due on an annual basis. The Annual Administrative Report and *Draft* Work Plan should be reviewed by the Technical Committee prior to submission to WASO on November 8. The final Work Plan is due to WASO by January 31.

Purpose: The purpose of the report is to account for money spent and employees hired during the fiscal year. A section of the report called "Summary of Major Accomplishments" is inserted into the annual report to Congress to obtain future funding for the program.

Author: The primary author of the report is the network program manager, with additional input from network staff on the year's accomplishments. The Technical Committee will review the report, and the Board of Directors must approve the report before submission. Then, the Intermountain Regional Office and the National I&M Program Manager will review the report and give approval.

Format: The format of the report is outlined by the national program each year.

MONITORING PROTOCOLS

Definition: Protocols created for the network are required to follow a Service-wide format, which is documented by Oakley et al. (2003). When a final protocol format has been decided upon, it will then serve as the template for all further protocols developed for the network.

Frequency: Protocols will be developed once for each vital sign; they will be updated on an as-needed basis and after the program review occurs.

Purpose: Protocols are used to integrate information concerning applicability, reliability and feasibility into a coherent whole that guides sampling design and data collection for vital signs monitoring.

Author: Protocols will be written by staff with help from collaborators in the academic community and other agencies.

Format: The protocols will follow the guidelines in Oakley et al. (2003) at a minimum, with additional information provided in a format agreed upon by network staff.

INVENTORY PROJECT REPORTS

Definition: An inventory project report documents the products of an inventory project, including species documented, new species found, data collected, etc.

Frequency: Inventory reports should be completed at the end of the inventory, although an annual synopsis of interesting results is helpful to network staff.

Purpose: The inventory report should detail the methods and results of the inventory project, as well as provide a list of species officially documented as occurring in the network parks. This report should also include the sites sampled and the distribution of the species within these sites.

Author: This report will be completed by the inventory project leader.

Format: Inventory reports follow a variety of formats.

ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS REPORTS

Definition: Three synthesis reports will be developed by the GRYN. First, a full-length report detailing the status and management options with regard to the vital signs will be developed to provide a synthesis of the progress of monitoring, as well as a picture of overall ecosystem health. Also, a detailed synthesis report will be provided that includes information needed to make day-to-day, on-the-ground management decisions. Finally, an annual progress report will synthesize the year's activities and provide a synopsis for interested parties.

Frequency: Full-length synthesis report: every ten years; detailed synthesis report: at least once every ten years; and the annual progress report: once per year

Purpose: These reports will provide a synthesis of monitoring progress and a picture of the overall state of the ecosystem.

Author: The synthesis reports will be written by network staff, particularly the ecologist.

Format: To be determined.

PROGRAM REVIEW REPORTS

Definition: Review reports of the program are used as a formal review of program progress at various intervals.

Frequency: The National I&M Program recommends the completion of these reports on five-year intervals, and the network will begin these reviews in 2008.

Purpose: These reports are meant to review operations and results obtained by the program. If changes in protocols are determined to be necessary, they should be included in this report.

Author: This report will be initiated by the program manager, with input from other cooperators and network staff.

Format: The format will be determined once monitoring begins.

SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL ARTICLES AND BOOK CHAPTERS

Definition: This includes articles published in peer-reviewed scientific journals or chapters published in books.

Frequency: Variable.

Purpose: These articles and chapters represent a method for the network and its cooperators to disseminate information gained through the I&M program to a larger scientific audience.

Author: These articles will be prepared by network staff or cooperators.

Format: The format is determined by the journal or book publisher.

SYMPOSIA, WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCES

Definition: Symposia, workshops and conferences are interactive methods for engaging interested parties and communicating the objectives and progress of the I&M program and the GRYN to a wider audience, including external scientists and park managers.

Frequency: Variable

Purpose: These interactive methods help to connect with a wider audience, review progress, create new ideas or directions and communicate the purpose of the I&M program and the network.

Author: These workshops are generally initiated by the program manager, with reports written by staff.

Format: Workshop reports should be completed as soon as possible after the end of the workshop. Reports for large workshops should follow the GRYN Vital Signs Monitoring Workshop Report as a template. Smaller workshop reports should use the meeting note template created for the GRYN.

MONTHLY REPORTS

Definition: This report describes current happenings in the GRYN and is distributed to interested parties, including the Technical and Science Committees, Board of Directors, other network coordinators and participants in GRYN workshops.

Frequency: This report is distributed during the latter half of each month.

Purpose: The reports are meant to inform a large audience about current GRYN activities.

Author: The GRYN research associate, with input from network staff, will create and distribute the report.

Format: The format should follow the standard monthly report format.

SUBMISSIONS TO NETWORK PARK REPORTS

Definition: Short synopses of current activities in the GRYN are distributed to network parks for inclusion in their monthly reports.

Frequency: These reports are compiled on a monthly basis.

Purpose: The reports will help to inform managers at the parks about current happenings in the GRYN.

Author: The research associate and program manager will prepare these reports as relevant activities are completed.

Format: The reports are submitted to the parks in standard text format.

VISUAL IDENTITY SYSTEM

Definition: The visual identity system defines the network and identifies it to external parties.

Frequency: The system (including the logo, memorandum style and report style) should be used as frequently as possible. The NPS banner is another symbol that is encouraged by the NPS.

Purpose: This system is meant to identify the network within the NPS, as well as increase awareness of the network to outside parties.

Author: N/A

Format: Standard NPS visual identity system components (such as the NPS banner) should be used on official documents, while internal documents can follow the format developed by the network (i.e., memos, reports, etc.).

PUBLIC BROCHURES

Definition: Brochures that describe ongoing monitoring efforts and problem statements pertaining to vital signs of interest. These brochures may also be used to provide a synopsis and update on the current progress of the network.

Frequency: Variable.

Purpose: These brochures will inform interested parties, in a concise manner, of the background of the I&M program, the GRYN and current happenings and can be distributed to interested parties (i.e., park managers, superintendents, the public) on an as-needed basis.

Author: Network staff will develop these brochures, with input from participating collaborators, agencies, etc. when possible.

Format: Varies, depending on topic.

DATA MANAGEMENT PLAN

Definition: The data management plan describes the method for managing data pertinent to GRYN monitoring.

Frequency: The final version of the plan should be complete in FY2005, with continual revisions as needed.

Purpose: The purpose of the plan is to effectively communicate the scope of data management in the network and the method for managing data collected by and for the network.

Author: The data management plan is written by the data manager, with help from other network data managers.

Format: The format is determined by the national data management plan authors.

WEBSITE

Definition: The website serves as an online method for distributing information about GRYN activities, as well as providing a repository for reports and publications and templates for cooperators.

Frequency: To be determined.

Purpose: The website represents an efficient method for information dissemination to various parties quickly.

Author: The data manager, with help from a web designer, will develop the new web-based interface for the GRYN.

Format: To be determined.